

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2006

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:10 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Chatterjee and Raser present. Absent: Bloomfield, Sullebarger and Wallace. Mr. Kreider arrived at 3:13 P.M.

MINUTES

The Historic Conservation Board unanimously approved the minutes of the October 23, 2006 meeting (motion by Chatterjee, second by Spraul-Schmidt) and November 6, 2006 meeting (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Raser).

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 3733 SACHEM AVENUE, COLUMBIA-TUSCULUM HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on a new single-family residence to be built at 3733 Sachem Avenue. She stated that zoning variances had not been finally determined, but would likely be required for side yard setbacks. She said she had concerns that the design did not provide for a front entrance oriented to the street. Staff also had concern for the large suburban-style garage door and the fact that the west wall had few openings and the east was windowless.

Mr. Senhauser stated the plans provided by the applicant showed a flat grade and asked if the lot was flat as well. In response, Mr. Forwood stated CAGIS contour maps show the lot to have a four-foot rise from the front to the rear. Mr. Senhauser said the plans needed to be more representational of the lot. He advised the applicant to look at the designs of nearby houses and create plans that take advantage of the hillside and provides a design that better fits the neighborhood.

Mr. Senhauser urged the applicant to consider a tandem garage to eliminate the larger garage door and to provide a pedestrian entrance on the front elevation. He added that the width of the house was acceptable and in scale with the neighborhood.

Mr. Joel Kane, representative for the owners, stated there would be steps to the side entry to address the grade. He said the biggest challenge for the project is the almost zero side yard setbacks. He also pointed out that there was new construction across the street that includes the large suburban-style garage doors. Mr. Kane stated that the siding would be painted wood and added that the owner is from the neighborhood and would like to continue living there.

Mr. Raser stated the neighborhood is very pedestrian-oriented and that there is ample street parking on Sachem. He stated the side entrance did not look appropriate and was not visible from the street. Mr. Chatterjee and Ms. Spraul-Schmidt agreed that the pedestrian entrance was important and should to be emphasized.

Ms. Margo Warminski, of the Cincinnati Preservation Association, stated she also suggests revising the very wide horizontal garage design and modification of plans to address the slope.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 123 W. 9th STREET, NINTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on 123 W. 9th Street. She stated the Board first reviewed a proposal for a new garage door cut, an exterior deck and a fire escape system on October 9, 2006. Plan revisions made by the applicant included modifications to the deck and elimination of the fire escape system. The required second means of egress for the first floor commercial space will be accommodated through the garage, which now features a Thermacore System metal

overhead door with a pedestrian pass door. Ms. Cowden reviewed the staff report and recommended approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

In response to Mr. Kreider's question, Ms. Cowden stated other than the proposed new door cut, there were changes to two other original openings. A window on the east elevation would be infilled with brick, and a window on the rear elevation of the main block would be modified for a door to provide access to the new deck.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Kreider) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the deck as revised and the garage door cut with the condition that final drawings and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & ZONING VARIANCE, 1761 SYCAMORE STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Kreider, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to reconsider this item, tabled at September 25, 2006 meeting.

Staff member Caroline Kellam stated that on September 25, 2006 the Board first reviewed an application for Zoning Variances to permit a gravel parking area in the front yard and a 6' high solid privacy fence along Sycamore and Seitz Streets. The proposal did not meet the guidelines and the Board could not justify granting the variances. Rather than deny the application, the item was tabled to permit the applicant to revise the proposal based on comments from the Board and staff.

Ms. Kellam stated that the applicant had incorporated suggestions from Board into the new proposal and was able to reduce the number of necessary variances from four to one. The parking pad has been moved to the side yard facing Seitz Street Staff and a 6'-0" high metal picket fence replaces the solid fence. A zoning variance is still required for the height of the fence.

Ms. Kellam stated that the revised fencing, parking pad, patio and plantings meets the guidelines for the historic district. In an effort to encourage people to buy properties in transitional inner city neighborhoods, staff finds it is in the interest of historic conservation to allow for zoning variance.

In response to Mr. Kreider, Ms. Kellam stated there would be a 3'-0" retaining wall to accommodate the slight side yard slope and that one (dead) tree would be removed for the curb cut on Seitz. In response to Ms. Spraul-Schmidt, Ms. Kellam stated that pavers would be used for both the parking pad and patio. Mr. Forwood added the Department of Transportation & Engineering had indicated that it could approve the curb cut for the new location. Mr. Kreider commented that the current proposal was greatly improved and commended staff and the applicant for their efforts.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Kreider, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to take the following action:

1. Grant a zoning variances from Section 1421-33 Fences and Walls of the Zoning Code to allow for the construction of the 6' high wrought iron fence finding that such relief from the literal implication of the Zoning Code will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and
 - a) Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed new wrought iron fencing, parking pad, patio and plantings

3. Final plans and any revisions to be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 1618 SYCAMORE STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report for 1618 Sycamore Street. She reminded the Board that it had conditionally approved a Certificate of Appropriateness and Zoning Variances for an addition and roof deck on this property on August 9, 2004. However, since that time the owner revised the design and the Zoning Variances granted by the Board have expired and/or changed under the new Zoning Code.

Although the project was advertised for a Certificate of Appropriateness and Zoning Variances, the applicant and owner, Gale Parrish Sheldon, has requested that the Board consider the proposal as a Preliminary Design Review. Ms. Cowden stated that Ms. Sheldon wishes to modify substantially the design as presented in the staff report, limiting the work to a roof deck and a one-story garage on the rear elevation. The applicant, Gail Sheldon indicated that the two-story addition and the penthouse would be removed; only the roof deck and garage would be built. Drawings have not yet been prepared for the revised design.

Ms. Sheldon explained that her husband had passed in 2004, and the addition approved by the Board was too large for just her use. She indicated that she wanted a garage for safety reasons. The deck was desired to provide outdoor space and to ensure future marketability of the property.

In response to Mr. Raser, Ms. Sheldon stated that trees and nearby buildings would obscure views of the deck from pedestrians and automobiles on Sycamore Avenue. In response to Mr. Senhauser, Mr. Forwood stated that the height of the present addition exceeds the maximum building envelope by 2.8'; although the penthouse is being removed, it is possible that the height if the new deck rail will also exceed allowable height and require a variance.

Mr. Senhauser stated the new proposal is a dramatic improvement over the earlier one. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt added that the elimination of the penthouse was a positive move. Mr. Kreider suggested that the applicant work with her architect to make design improvements to the decking. Mr. Senhauser suggested the pitch of the garage roof be lowered to avoid blocking of the existing windows on the rear wall.

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION, CLIFTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 3416 CLIFTON AVENUE, CLIFTON

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on the National Register Nomination of the Clifton United Methodist Church, located at 3416 Clifton Avenue in Clifton. She gave a brief history of the nomination and outlined areas that staff felt needed strengthened.

Lorraine McIntee Phile, the nomination author, and Jeffrey Tilman, Chairman of Clifton United Methodist Church's Board of Trustees, were present to answer questions of the Board and to support the nomination. Mr. Tilman indicated that staff's review was based on an older draft of the Registration Form that had since been modified to address most of staff's concerns.

In response to Mr. Raser, Mr. Tilman stated that the buttresses added to the front of the church were required to stabilize the building and in his opinion would not jeopardize the nomination. Mr. Tilman added that the rear addition was a greater concern but that it ultimately did not detract from the church.

Mr. Senhauser and Ms. Spraul-Schmidt suggested the definition of "Akron Plan" be provided earlier in the application. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt suggested adding more historical information regarding the organ in Section 7, page 4. She stated Zane Miller's writings on Clifton should be added to the bibliography. Section 8 should also include a brief discussion of the history, and

development of Clifton as a suburban neighborhood. This discussion and the inclusion of Clifton's date of incorporation into the City of Cincinnati will demonstrate that Clifton United Methodist was founded as a suburban church.

Margo Warminski, Cincinnati Preservation Association, stated she was pleased to support the nomination and agreed with staff's recommendations. She stated the nomination would be strengthened through a comparison of Clifton United Methodist with other churches designed by Crapsey & Brown. Ms. Warminski indicated this could easily be done through a comparison of Clifton United Methodist to Crapsey & Brown commissions already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Raser) to take the following action:

1. Find that the Clifton United Methodist Church meets the criterion for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
2. Recommend that the nomination be revised to include a description of why/how Clifton United Methodist Church exemplifies a particular architectural style;
3. Recommend that the nomination be revised to state specifically the church's eligibility under Criteria Consideration A;
4. Encourage the author to undertake additional research to strengthen the nomination as described in the staff report; and
5. Direct staff to forward the Board's findings regarding this nomination to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office prior to the December 1, 2006 meeting of the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date: _____